Critics of Warren Report Objects of CIA Campaign

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The Central Intelligence Agency directed its offices around the world in 1967 "to employ propaganda assest" to counter doubts raised by critics of the Warren Commission's investigation into the assassination of Presidnet Kennedy.

The propaganda campaign was to be waged in part by passing unclassified information about the assassination to CIA "assets" who could use the material in writing "book reviews and feature articles" that would "answer and refute the attacks of the critics," according to a newly released CIA document.

The document said the aim was "to provide material for countering and discrediting the claims of the conspiracy theorists, so as to inhibit the circulation of such claims in other countries."

The document was among some 850 pages of material released yesterday by the CIA under the Freedom of Information Act.

The documents show that the CIA examined copies of almost all books about the November, 1963, assassination, including one by then-Congressman Gerald R. Ford. A CIA officer called Ford's book "a re-hash of the Oswald case" and criticized its "loose" writing.

Ford was a member of the Warren Commission which concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald was solely responsible for the assassination. Ford quoted extensively from secret sessions of the commission in his book, "Portrait of an Assassin," which defended the commission's finding.

The 1967 dispatch to "chiefs, certain stations and bases" says that the rash of books and articles criticizing the Warren Commission's finding "is a matter of concern to the U.S. government, including our organization."

"Efforts to impugn [the] rectitude and wisdom [of] commission members and [staff] tend to cast doubt on the whole leadership of American society," the memo said.

"Moreover, there seems to be an increasing tendency to hint that President Johnson, himself, as the one person who might be said to have benefited, was in some way responsible for the assassination.

"Innuendo of such seriousness affects not only the individual concerned, but also the whole reputation of the American government."

In using propaganda assets to refute these charges, the dispatch said, "our play should point out, as applicable, that the critics are (1) wedded to theories adopted before the evidence was in, (2) politically interested, (3) financially interested, (4) hasty and inaccurate in their research, or (5) infatuated with their own theories."